

News Release

Senator Pete V. Domenici

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DOMENICI SECURES \$990,000 FOR BACA RANCH MANAGEMENT

Senate Approves FY 2001 Interior Appropriations Bill

WASHINGTON -- On the heels of Congress finishing work on a bill authorizing the federal purchase of the Baca Ranch, Senator Pete Domenici today reported he has secured \$990,000 to begin implementing the unique management plan for the Jemez mountain property.

Domenici, a Senate Appropriations Committee member, secured the funding in the **FY 2001 Interior Appropriations Bill**, which passed the Senate (97-2) today. The funding will allow the Forest Service to implement the Valles Caldera Preservation Act, and begin establishing the unique board of trustees that will manage the ranch.

"This is a great month for the Baca Ranch. Last week the House approved the bill authorizing the purchase of the property, and today we've taken the first step to begin implementing the unique trust that will manage the ranch," Domenici said. "We also expect the president to sign the authorizing bill in short order."

Last wee, Congress sent President Clinton the **Valles Caldera National Preservation & Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act** (S.1892). He has until July 26 to sign the bill which authorizes federal purchase of the 95,000-acre Baca Ranch and establishes important land management reforms.

The Domenici amendment provides \$990,000 to cover necessary expenses for implementing the legislation in the coming year, and will be available to the Interior Secretary for the management of the Baca Ranch until the Valles Caldera Trust assumes the role.

The FY 2001 Interior Appropriations Bill will next be considered by a conference committee set to reconcile differences in the Senate and House-passed versions of the bill. Domenici will serve on this conference panel.

Domenici confirmed that the funding bill also includes his amendment on national forest health, which provides \$240.3 million for a program that authorizes the U.S. Forest Service (\$120 million) and the Department of Interior (\$120.3 million) to remove hazardous material to alleviate immediate emergency threats to so-called "urban or wildland interface areas" or where communities abut forests.

The Domenici amendment **would not** override current environmental, labor, or

civil rights laws. It would, however, expand federal activities to clear forests of excess “fuel” in areas where federal lands interface with communities.

“As the catastrophic fires in New Mexico this year illustrate, our forests are a tinder box ready to explode. This proposal would simply provide the stewards of our forests with the tools they need to clean the forests and improve safety around our communities,” Domenici said.

Senators Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.) and Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.) are primary cosponsors of the forest health amendment, which was also cosponsored by Senator Jeff Bingaman.

More than 400,000 acres in New Mexico have been consumed by wildfires this year, including more than 48,000 acres consumed when the disastrous Cerro Grande Fire blazed through Los Alamos in May.

The Domenici amendment would allow the Interior Department and U.S. Forest Service to encourage contracts for such work, with an emphasis on: (1) local, non-profit, or cooperative entities; (2) Youth Conservation Corps crews or related partnerships with state, local, and non-profit youth groups; (3) Small or micro-businesses; or (4) other entities that will hire or train a significant percentage of local people to complete such contracts.

Also in line with forest health efforts, the bill increases funding for wildland fire management for the U.S. Forest Service (\$768.5 million) and BLM (\$293 million).

Domenici said the Senate-passed \$15.5 billion Interior Appropriations Bill includes millions in federal support for New Mexico projects—like the bosque, the Petroglyph National Monument, Hispanic Cultural Center, and American Indian programs.

After writing the legislation to create it 10 years ago, Domenici has gained \$2.7 million for the National Park Service to complete federal land acquisition at the **Petroglyph National Monument** in Albuquerque. This funding was not included in the president’s budget request.

Elsewhere in the bill for New Mexico, the legislation provides a total of \$47.4 million in **BIA school construction**, including \$9.0 million for the Zia Day School, \$14.47 million for the Baca Consolidated Community School on the Navajo Reservation, and \$23.92 million for the Wingate Elementary School at Fort Wingate.

In another project championed by Domenici, the committee has agreed to provide \$1.5 million to continue federal support for construction of the performing arts facility for the **Hispanic Cultural Center** in Albuquerque. This National Park Service funding will be directed toward Phase 2 construction of the cultural center. To date, Domenici, has secured \$13.5 million in federal appropriations for the performing arts center, and is working to meet a \$17.8 million congressional commitment to the project.

Domenici provided the following summary of key funding he helped gain for New Mexico in the bill:

- C \$990,000 to begin implementing the unique management plan for the **Baca Ranch**;
- C \$750,000 to begin implementing the **Route 66 National Historic Highway** legislation, a Domenici initiative;
- C \$1 million in National Park Service construction funding to begin a \$15 million renovation project for the **Palace of the Governors** in Santa Fe;
- C \$4.125 million for the **Institute of American Indian Arts** in Santa Fe;
- C \$5.5 million for operations at the **Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute** (SIPI) in Albuquerque, a \$115,000 increase above 2000 funding;
- C \$999,000 to institute operational support for the **Crownpoint Institute of Technology**;
- C \$1.0 million for the **Four Corners Sustainable Forestry** program, funded through the Forest Service's State & Private Forestry Program to assess forest health and economic displacement in rural communities in the Four Corners states of New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Colorado;
- C \$800,000 to continue the Rio Grande **bosque preservation initiative** and implement the biological management plan, an increase of \$252,000 above 2000;
- C \$400,000 to continue repairing a series of 650 erosion control structures on the **Rio Puerco**, the same as the FY2000 funding level for this Domenici initiative; and,
- C \$25.4 million for continued construction of the **Navajo Indian Irrigation Project**.

The following is a more detailed review of New Mexico-related items in the FY 2001 Interior Appropriations Bill, all of which Domenici—as a member of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee—worked to secure for the state:

Baca Ranch Management - At Domenici's request, the bill includes \$990,000 to allow the Forest Service to implement the Valles Caldera Preservation Act, and begin establishing the unique board that will eventually management the ranch.

Route 66 Preservation Initiative - At Domenici's request, the bill includes \$750,000 through the National Park Service to implement legislation, first pushed in Congress by Domenici, to preserve the historic aspects of Route 66, a major east-west highway that paved the way for many to move West.

New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Center - At Domenici's request, \$1.5 million through the National Park Service construction program to fund Phase 2 of the Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque. Previously, Domenici has secured \$13.5 million in federal support for the center.

Palace of the Governors, Santa Fe - At Domenici's request, \$1 million is provided through the National Park Service construction program to begin this \$15 million

renovation at the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe. These funds are provided subject to enactment of Domenici's authorization legislation, which is currently pending in the House of Representatives.

Petroglyph National Monument - At Domenici's request, \$2.7 million to complete land acquisition by the National Park Service for the Petroglyph National Monument at Albuquerque.

Vanishing Treasures Initiative - \$3.8 million for the Vanishing Treasures initiative to protect ancient ruins and historical structures in park units, which is \$810,000 million above 2000 funding. This program has been used to preserve ancient Anasazi ruins in the Southwest, including the Chaco Culture National Historic Park in San Juan County.

Indian Diabetes Initiative - In addition to ongoing Indian Health Service programs to prevent and treat diabetes, \$30 million will be provided to the IHS for diabetes programs through the Domenici five-year initiative in the 1997 Balanced Budget Act. The Senate bill includes report language, included at Domenici's request, for the IHS to continue its support of this Domenici initiative and the National Diabetes Prevention Center in Gallup, which is jointly funded by the Centers for Disease Control.

Middle Rio Grande Bosque Research Proposal - \$800,000 through the Fish and Wildlife Service ecological services program for the bosque preservation initiative started by Domenici. This level of funding is \$252,000 above the president's budget request and reflects Domenici's request for additional funding to continue the bosque ecosystem monitoring program and work associated with an April fire in the bosque.

Rio Puerco Watershed Rehabilitation - \$400,000 to continue the repair of a series of 650 erosion control structures along the Rio Puerco in New Mexico. This funding level is the same as FY2000. The continued failure of these structures is causing siltation of the Elephant Butte Lake and Reservoir. Domenici started this specific funding in FY 1993.

Carlsbad Caverns National Park - The bill includes language prohibiting the use of any funds provided by the Act to enter into or implement a concession contract which permits or requires the removal of the underground lunchroom at the Carlsbad Caverns.

Four Corners Sustainable Forestry Initiative - \$1 million through the Forest Service's State & Private Forestry Program to continue this initiative to assess forest health and economic displacement in rural communities in New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Colorado. This program will also provide benefits to areas such as Taos and Rio Arriba counties. This is \$500,000 above the president's budget request and the same as the FY2000 funding level.

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) School Construction - Three replacement schools in New Mexico are funded in this bill at a total of \$47.4 million through the BIA. The bill

provides \$9.0 million for the Zia Day School, \$14.47 million for the Baca Consolidated Community School on the Navajo Reservation, and \$23.92 million for the Wingate Elementary School in New Mexico.

Crownpoint Institute of Technology - \$999,000 is provided for CIT to assist with operations and maintenance of this vocational education institution serving the Navajo Nation reservation. This is an increase of \$750,000 above the FY2000 funding level.

Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) - \$4.125 million is provided for the IAIA in Santa Fe. This funding level reflects Domenici's work to gain a \$2 million increase over FY2000 funding.

Tribal Colleges - \$38.3 million, \$3 million more than FY2000, is approved to support the operation of Tribal Colleges, including the Navajo Community College (Diné) in Shiprock.

Navajo Indian Irrigation Project (NIIP) - \$25.4 million for continued construction of the NIIP in New Mexico. These funds will be used by the Tribe for further construction of Block 8 of the project. This is the same as the FY 2000 level.

BIA Safety of Dams Project (Zuni Pueblo) - \$4.3 million for the Black Rock Dam on the Zuni Pueblo Reservation to continue repairs.

Payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) - \$145 million is provided to continue the PILT program, which is \$10.6 million above the 2000 level and the President's request. This funding provides an important source of revenues for New Mexico counties. New Mexico received \$11.5 million in PILT payments in 1999, the largest payment of any state.

Water Resources Research Program - \$5.1 million is approved to continue these research activities at approximately the 2000 level. The **Water Resources Research Institute in New Mexico** has recently developed a new process to remove arsenic from water, which is a serious problem for New Mexico.

Grazing Permits - The Senate bill restates a Domenici provision directing that grazing permits and leases which expire or are transferred, in FY2001, be renewed on the same terms and conditions as contained in the expiring permit or lease until such time as the Interior Secretary completes the process of renewing the permits and leases in compliance with all applicable laws.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) - \$693 million provided for the BLM in FY2001, \$49 million more than current funding.

BLM Wildland Fire Management - \$293 million, \$1.7 million more than FY2000. The BLM gained an additional \$200 million for this program through an FY2000 emergency supplemental funding package recently signed by the president.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - \$758.4 million for resource management, \$43.9 million above last year's level.

National Park Service - \$1.4 billion for National Park Service operations, an \$80 million increase over FY2000.

BIA - \$1.7 billion provided overall for operation of BIA programs, an increase of \$65 million over FY2000. The bill provides an overall total of \$277 million for Indian Education Facilities for new schools and maintenance, representing a \$144 million increase over FY2000 funding.

U.S. Forest Service - \$1.2 billion for management of the National Forest system, \$85.9 million above FY2000.

U.S. Forest Service Wildland Fire Management - \$768.5 million for wildlife fire management, \$150 million of which is contingent emergency funding. This is an increase of \$544,000 over FY2000 for non-emergency funding.